

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Matthew: Jesus As Israel's Messiah And His Kingdom

D. Christ As Israel's Messiah Seen In His Discipling Of His Followers, Matthew 6:13-20:34

3. Christ's Messianic Identity Seen In His Teaching On Living The Cross Before The Crown

e. Christ's Instruction On Humbly Heeding God On Marriage And Divorce

(Matthew 19:1-12)

I. Introduction

- A. The world's lusts of the eyes, of the flesh and of the pride of life (1 John 2:15-16) greatly impact relationships between men and women so that many marriages end in divorce and head on into remarriage of other partners.
- B. However, this is **not God's way** for the *believer* to function in God's cross-before-the-crown lifestyle (Matthew 16:24), and Matthew 19:1-12 directs us on the correct behavior in this realm (as follows):

II. Christ's Instruction On Humbly Heeding God On Marriage And Divorce, Matthew 19:1-12.

- A. The Pharisees one day "put" Jesus "to the test" (*peirazo*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 646) in "a bad sense" on the issue of divorce, asking Him if it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife for every reason, Matthew 19:1-3 NIV.
- B. The historical background clarifies this test: (1) the followers of rabbi Hillel allowed for divorce for many reasons where the followers of rabbi Shammai held divorce could occur only if a wife committed immorality, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Matthew 19:3. (2) Thus, the Pharisees aimed to get Jesus to commit to one of these hotly contested views to cause Him to lose half of His followers, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 63.
- C. Jesus avoided entrapment in the Hillel-Shammai nationwide debate, reminding the Pharisees of God's purpose in establishing marriage, *Ibid.* He referred to Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 to teach God created man and woman to be "one flesh" in marriage, that what God thus joined together man was not to put asunder, Matthew 19:4-6.
- D. The Pharisees then alluded to Deuteronomy 24:1-4, saying Moses there commanded people to divorce, and asked Jesus why Moses' command contrasted with His words that God did not allow for divorce, Matt. 19:7.
- E. In reality, Moses did **not** there *command* divorce: the King James Version *errantly* puts the "then" (apodosis) clause at Deuteronomy 24:1b to teach Moses required a man to divorce his wife while the Hebrew text puts the "then" clause at the start of verse 4; Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 299; Deut. 24:1-4 ESV. The Hebrew text reveals Moses directed that if a man for any reason divorced his wife and wed another only to divorce her, he could not rewed his first wife! Moses was trying to curb rampant divorce! (*Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 305)
- F. Accordingly, Jesus corrected the Pharisees' claim that Moses called for divorce, teaching that Moses "allowed, permitted" (*epitrepo*, *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 303) divorce due to Israel's hardness of heart, but that from the beginning of creation that was not God's intent for the institution of marriage, Matthew 19:8.
- G. Jesus added that he who divorced his wife "except . . . for fornication" and wed another committed adultery, and he that married her who had been divorced committed adultery, Matthew 19:9. We explain this clause:
 - 1. The word "fornication" in this clause can **not** mean general immorality, for that would make Jesus side with the followers of Shammai and fall into the trap set for Him by the Pharisees back in Matthew 19:3.
 - 2. Also, immorality by a married party is adultery, the Greek term being *moicheia*, not the term *porneia* that is used in this exception clause (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 72; *Ibid.*, Arndt & Ging., p. 528, 699-700).
 - 3. Then, there were only three cases in which a **married** person in Israel in Jesus' day was said to be guilty of *porneia* -- (a) the marriage of close relatives opposite the Law, (b) the marriage of a Jew and a Gentile opposite the Law and (c) immorality during a betrothal period, and (d) each such situation called for a bill of divorce, Howard G. Hendricks, Christian Counseling for Contemporary Problems, 1968, p. 112-113.
- H. Thus, Jesus forbade divorce in all cases except where one had to obey the Law as a Jew, or if immorality occurred before an engaged couple had come together, *stricter* than **either** the Hillel **or** Shammai positions.
- I. The disciples reacted to Jesus' stand to say it would be better not to risk getting stuck in a bad marriage by never marrying, Matt. 19:10. Jesus explained this was at times necessary for those able to receive it -- in the case those born congenitally incapable to wed, in the case of those made congenitally incapable to wed and in the case of those desiring to be devoted to God as celibates, Matt. 19:11-12; *Ibid.*, Ryrie, fn. to Matt. 19:10.

Lesson: *In the believer's cross-before-the-crown calling, divorce or divorce and remarriage is not allowed. Yet, if such events DO occur in one's life, God calls him to STAY in his LATEST marital status, 1 Corinthians 7:10-17.*

Application: *May we adhere to our spouse in marriage until death parts the union in line with God's will!*